TEMPLATE

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLAN
for
{Project /Activity}

Related to
The National Environmental Information Exchange Network
Grant Program

{Name of Organization }
{Address }

{Date}

Concurrence:

                                                             Date:

_____
{Secretary/Director, Office/Organization}

                                                             Date:

_____
{QA Manager, Office/Organization}

                                                             Date:

_____
{QA Officer, Office/Organization}

                                                             Date:

_____
{Network Coordinator} U.S. EPA Region

                                                             Date:

_____
{Network Grants Project Officer} U.S. EPA Region --

                                                             Date:

_____
{Regional QA Manager} U.S. EPA Region --

                                                             Date:

_____
{Regional Administrator} U.S. EPA   Region --

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{Name of Organization- Applicant}

{ Name and Tiles}

U.S.EPA Region --

{Name}, Deputy Regional Administrator

{Name}, Network Coordinator

{Name}, Network Grants Project Officer

{Name}, Regional QA Manager

Section I.   INTRODUCTION

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policy requires that all work performed by or on behalf of EPA involving environmental data operations or environmental technologies that include steps to use or report environmental information, will be implemented in accordance with an Agency-approved, Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

This requirement is defined in *Policy and Program Requirements for the Mandatory Agency-wide Quality System*, EPA Order 5360.1 A2 (May 2000) for EPA organizations, and in applicable regulations governing extramural agreements (e.g., under the authority of 48 CFR.46, 40 CFR 30, 40 CFR 31 and 35, etc.) for non-EPA organizations.
See www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/5360-1.pdf.

The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)
The QAPP integrates all technical and quality aspects of a project, including planning, implementation, and assessment. The purpose of the QAPP is to document planning results for environmental data operations or environmental technologies and to provide a project-specific "blueprint" for obtaining the type and quality of environmental data needed for a specific decision or use. The QAPP documents how quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) will be applied to an environmental data operation or environmental technology to assure the results obtained are of the type and quality needed and expected. The documentation of the QAPP should comply with *EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans*, EPA QA/R-5 (March 2001) *See* www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/r5-final.pdf.

A QAPP for a Network grant must document a description of the project, the organization and responsibilities, quality assurance requirements, special qualifications and required staff training, and documentation and records requirements. It must provide criteria by which progress in attaining project goals can be assessed. The QAPP elements are detailed in the following sections.

Section II.   PROBLEM DEFINITION AND BACKGROUND

State environmental agencies and EPA depend on the flow of quality information for every aspect of their work. Yet, many of the current data systems and management approaches to information exchange are ineffective and burdensome.

The National Environmental Information Exchange Network will provide an alternative to current approaches to exchanging data. Using Internet technologies and standard formats for data exchange between nodes or portals maintained by participating partners, the Network will increase the efficiency of information management, improve the quality of environmental data, and provide ready access to this data by federal and State agencies, improving their ability to use this information to protect public health and the environment.

The grant program to help build the Network has four parts: 1) Core Capacity Grants, 2)

Challenge Grants, 3) Network Steering Grants, and 4) a Tribal Set-Aside, each with their own eligibility standards. The QA project plan that is developed should be tailored to the specific requirements and criteria for the applicable type of grant awarded. The level of detail of the QA Project Plan should be based on a graded approach that fits the nature of the work being performed.

{*Name of the organization*} has initiated a comprehensive project to develop components of the Network infrastructure. Once complete, this infrastructure will provide electronic data submittal and reporting via the Internet for {*Name of the State*} regulated facilities, EPA, local government, and the general public. The {*Name of the organization*} will strive to achieve transparency that enables an understanding for all who submit or use data from this system.

A primary goal of the re-engineered system is to provide a state node or portal on the Exchange Network that will create efficiencies in data transmittal between States and EPA, improve data accuracy, and reduce industry's reporting burden. {*describe the system*}.

If the re-engineered or new data management system involves the improvement and integration of various components of both hardware and software, identify each component including the description of its functions/use. Note: If relevant detailed information has already been described in other documents such as the grant proposal, reference the document (attach to QAPP) including the appropriate section and page numbers.

Section III   PROJECT TASK/DESCRIPTION

For the {*Name of the organization*}, the Network grant will be used as vehicle to re-engineer or build information management systems to achieve the following goals:

- Ease the exchange of data between EPA and States;
- Reduce the burden of environmental reporting on the regulated community;
- Integrate environmental data across States and EPA.

To achieve these goals, the Network grant will be used to support and assist in the following focused areas:

{*Provide a Description of all of the major components/areas of this project (e.g., building a core component of the Network, other work as described in grant categories, etc.) including the benefits/outcome of the project, and a time-line of the project.* } ***Note****: If these details are already documented in the proposal, reference the appropriate section and page in that document.*

Section IV.   Quality Assurance Objectives

The primary goal of the Network grant is to support *{Name of the organization}* efforts to re-engineering the data management system/process so that environmental data from the various media programs/sources can be integrated into a single data base. The project does not involve the collection of new environmental data, but rather a redesign of the information management

system/process and testing to verify the new data system. A minimum of quality assurance (QA) planning and documentation will be required to ensure the system's integrity and verify achievement of project goals, based on measures of the target project criteria explained in this document.

Quality Assurance procedures for the Network grant will include:

1.   Comply with policies established by the State/EPA Information Management Workgroup (IMWG).

2.   Following established IT standard operating procedures for system development.

3.   Document all development and re-design work including the logic or rationale used in design and testing, and the results of each test.

4.   System programming for data exchange must accommodate the use of EPA's approved data standards, approved by the Environmental Council of the States.

Section V.   ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

{Describe your organization including a concise organizational chart showing the relationships and lines of communication among all project participants. Identify individual and/or offices and branches within your organization participating in the project, and discuss their roles and responsibilities in relation to the project}

Example

The *{Name of the organization}* is under the supervision and direction of the *{Secretary/ Director/Commissioner}*, who serves as the executive head and chief administrative officer of the {Agency/Department}. As head of the {Name of the organization}, the *{Secretary/Director/Commissioner}* has the responsibility for the policies, administration, control and operation of the functions, programs and affairs of the *{Agency/Department}* that are under the general control and supervision of the Governor.

Under the direct supervision of the *{Secretary/Director/Commissioner}* are *{Assistant Secretaries/Deputy Directors/Deputy Commissioners}*, who are responsible for the direction of each *{Name of Organization}* Office. The role and responsibilities of each office that associated with this project, including its key person are documented as follows:

The Office of Management and Finance is responsible for the administration of laboratory services. This Office is also responsible for ensuring that data programs developed by the various environmental media are integrated into a single data system, and therefore, is responsible for implementation of the Network grant.

The Office of Environmental Compliance consists of a Surveillance Division and an Enforcement Division. The Office is responsible for the monitoring and surveillance procedures as set forth in

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statute, regulation and policy and enforcement of these regulations through the issuance of enforcement actions against violators.

The Office of Environmental Services is responsible for regulating the management of hazardous waste through permitting and other regulatory activities consistent with laws, regulations and agency policies.

The Office of Environmental Assessment is responsible for evaluating the condition of the state's environmental resources and providing the technical expertise and planning efforts to promote the enhancement of the environment.

The Quality Assurance Manager (QAM) reports directly to the Secretary of the Agency. The QAM is ultimately responsible for coordinating the management of quality systems implemented throughout *{Name of the organization}*, in particular, implementation of the agency Quality Management Plan.

Section VI.   SPECIAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS/CERTIFICATION

{*Name of the organization*} is committed to ensure that managers and staff who are responsible for this project receive technical as well as quality assurance training for all forms of data collection, storage, transfer and dissemination. {*Name of the organization*} maintains up-to-date training records listing courses successfully completed by each employee. All employees involved in the transfer and/or use of {*Name of the organization*} re-engineered information management system/data systems and processes are trained or will be trained in the new data systems and process, and will receive computer security training on an on-going basis to ensure no unwarranted system entry or breach of system integrity, and to protect the system from virus attacks.

Section VII. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS

The {*Name of the organization*} commits to document all development and re-design work including the logic used in design choices, tests conducted and their results. These documentation and records will be stored and maintained with the project files.